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## CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for manipulating data in a backend system using an automated  
5 agent, said apparatus comprising:

a messaging client for exchanging messages over a network with a  
messaging server;

said automated agent, wherein said automated agent is coupled to said  
messaging server; and

10 said backend system, wherein said backend system is coupled to said  
automated agent.

2. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent is capable of  
accepting requests and issuing responses.

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3. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent obtains and uses  
input data from a plurality of other entities coupled to said messaging server for  
helping to determine said manipulation of data.

20 4. The apparatus of Claim 3, wherein said automated agent initiates messaging  
communications to said plurality of other entities and mediates a discussion related  
to said input data.

6. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent appears as a buddy  
25 on a buddy list.

6. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent initiates messaging communications to prospective meeting attendees and mediates a discussion related to said meeting.

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7. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent is capable of responding with any of, but not limited to: information, confirmation, availability, and a request for additional information.

10 8. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said messaging client exchanges messages via said network with said messaging server by any of, but not limited to:

two-way messaging in real-time and/or non-real-time;

email in real-time and/or non-real-time;

a paging network in one-way and/or two-way in near-real-time; and

15 instant messaging systems in two-way in real-time.

9. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent received messages passed from said messaging server and parses said messages.

20 10. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said backend system maintains informational data of said messaging client, and said messaging client is capable of accessing said informational data directly.

11. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said messaging client engages in a dialog  
25 with said automated agent.

12. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent performs any of:  
proactively sending messages to said messaging client, said messages  
comprising, but not limited to alerting and reminders;

5 asking a series of questions to said messaging client to determine intent; and  
determining resource availability.

13. A method for manipulating data in a backend system using an automated  
agent, said method comprising:

10 providing a messaging client for exchanging messages over a network with a  
messaging server;

providing said automated agent, wherein said automated agent is coupled to  
said messaging server; and

15 providing said backend system, wherein said backend system is coupled to  
said automated agent.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein said automated agent is capable of  
accepting requests and issuing responses.

20 15. The method of Claim 13, wherein said automated agent obtains and uses  
input data from a plurality of other entities coupled to said messaging server for  
helping to determine said manipulation of data.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein said automated agent initiates messaging communications to said plurality of other entities and mediates a discussion related to said input data.

5 17. The method of Claim 13, wherein said automated agent appears as a buddy on a buddy list.

18. The method of Claim 13, wherein said automated agent initiates messaging communications to prospective meeting attendees and mediates a discussion  
10 related to said meeting.

19. The method of Claim 13, wherein said automated agent is capable of responding with any of, but not limited to: information, confirmation, availability, and a request for additional information.

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20. The method of Claim 13, wherein said messaging client exchanges messages via said network with said messaging server by any of, but not limited to:

two-way messaging in real-time and/or non-real-time;

email in real-time and/or non-real-time;

20 a paging network in one-way and/or two-way in near-real-time; and  
instant messaging systems in two-way in real-time.

21. The method of Claim 13, wherein said automated agent received messages passed from said messaging server and parses said messages.

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22. The method of Claim 13, wherein said backend system maintains informational data of said messaging client, and said messaging client is capable of accessing said informational data directly.

5 23. The method of Claim 13, wherein said messaging client engages in a dialog with said automated agent.

24. The method of Claim 13, said automated agent performing any of:  
proactively sending messages to said messaging client, said messages

10 comprising, but not limited to alerting and reminders;

asking a series of questions to said messaging client to determine intent; and  
determining resource availability.